

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, September 9, 2003

8:30 a.m.

Family Service Center of Clay County - Room #4

M I N U T E S

The Clay County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, September 9, 2003, with all commissioners present: Brunsvold, Campbell, Evert, McCarthy, and Waller.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by McCarthy, seconded by Campbell, and unanimously carried, the agenda was approved with the following additions:

- Set Preliminary 2004 Levy
- Mr. Howard Person re: Extension Ag position

SET PRELIMINARY LEVY FOR 2004

On motion by McCarthy, seconded by Brunsvold, and unanimously carried, the Board adopted the following resolution setting the preliminary levy for 2004 at the maximum which will allow for flexibility in budgeting, as follows:

RESOLUTION 2003-48

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Department of Revenue has established guidelines for county government to follow in order to meet the "Truth in Taxation" requirements for taxes payable in 2004; and

WHEREAS, these guidelines state that counties must certify a proposed levy by September 15, 2003;

WHEREAS, this certified levy must be after the deduction of HACA aid;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Clay County Board of Commissioners hereby sets the proposed levy for taxes to be collected in 2004 as follows:

	Preliminary Levy	HACA	Certified Levy
Revenue Fund	7,129,339	461,725	6,667,614
Road & Bridge Fund	2,508,770	162,478	2,346,292
Building Improvements	50,000	3,238	46,762
Library	201,881	13,075	188,806
Debt Retirement	208,448	-	208,448
Social Services	5,537,000	358,598	5,178,402
Debt Retirement - JD	86,702	-	86,702
Debt Retirement - RB	185,138	-	185,138
Debt Retirement - Courthouse	344,021	-	344,021

Jail Operating	2,643,809	-	2,643,809
PERA Increase	28,392	-	28,392
Increase in matching grants	198,692	-	198,692
TOTAL	19,122,192	999,114	18,123,078

BE IT RESOLVED, that this is a proposed levy only and is subject to change.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clay County Board of Commissioners confirms the date of their public budget hearing to be Thursday, December 4, 2003, at 7:00 pm in the Clay County Courthouse, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Commissioner Brunsvold commented that in the years 2000, 2001, and 2002 the County had a surplus revenue at the end of each year. He stated that he was not in favor of cutting services if the County would ultimately have a surplus for the year. County Auditor Lori Johnson commented that there would be no surplus this year due to the transfer for the Courthouse addition/remodeling, the 2003 cuts, and the fact that earnings are down.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS TO SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDER LISTS

By consent agenda, the Board approved an updated list of providers for Social Services programs.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens present who wished to address the Board.

COMMUNICATION FROM FAMILY HEALTH CARE CENTER RE: LEASE COST FOR MOORHEAD DENTAL PROGRAM

The Board reviewed a communication from Family Health Care Center regarding the possibility of the County continuing to waive part of the facility cost for the Moorhead Dental Program, which is housed in the Family Service Center. The request amounts to approximately \$13,000/year. County Administrator Vijay Sethi stated that other governmental entities (City of Moorhead, City of West Fargo, Cass County, City of Fargo) also strongly support this program, both in philosophy and funding.

Commissioner Brunsvold felt this item should be included in the entire financial picture of the Family Service Center.

On motion by Brunsvold, seconded by Waller, and unanimously carried, the Board agreed to continue the subsidy in the facility cost (approximately \$13,000) of the Moorhead Dental program, as requested.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION RE: 2003 HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUDGET DEFICIT

Public Health Administrator Betty Windom Kirsch informed the Board that after having met with the Administration & Finance Committee regarding her 2003 and 2004 budget cuts, the Committee has recommended allowing the 2003 budget to be over by approximately \$9700 due to the fact that if further cuts were made, they would be too deep for 2004 (by approximately \$75,000).

Commissioner Waller felt it makes sense to average the budget over two years given the extraordinary circumstances this year, rather than making further employee reductions. County Auditor Lori Johnson stated that for 2003 the Public Health Department's negative fund balance would be increased for 2003, and by the end of 2004 it would be improved.

Commissioner Campbell expressed concern that the 2003 negative balance will get lost and won't be kept track of with next year's budget. Ms. Windom Kirsch stated that her staff will keep track of this item as it pertains to the ongoing negative fund balance.

On motion by Waller, seconded by Brunsvold, and unanimously carried, the Board supported no further cuts in the Health Department for 2003, recognizing that it may take two years to recoup the deficit.

DETOX CONTRACT REVISION

This item will be discussed by the Administration & Finance Committee prior to County Board discussion.

REQUEST FOR HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND OUT OF STATE WORKSHOP

On motion by Waller, seconded by Brunsvold, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized out of state travel for Health Administrator Betty Windom Kirsch to attend a conference pertaining to radon in Nashville, TN, October 5-8, 2003.

PROPOSAL FOR COUNTYWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DIRECTOR

County Administrator Vijay Sethi provided a draft Position Profile for the proposed Countywide Economic Development Director position. The profile includes the rationale and scope for the position, qualifications, compensation, etc. (See Attachment "A"). Mr. Sethi stated that in gathering this information, he had talked with economic development organizations in the state, retrieved position profiles from executive job search firms, etc. Several local individuals have also been part of a work group discussing this issue (Dr. Roland Barden, Dr. Larry Nybladh, Mr. Jesse McCullom, Mr. Bruce Messelt, and Commissioners Brunsvold and Waller).

Mr. Sethi stated that it is yet to be determined if the position will be a contract position, a permanent County employee, or a County employee hired for a specific period of time. Considerable discussion took place as to the merits of each option. Mr. Sethi stated that if the position is a County position and housed in the Central Administration department, the clerical support could be provided by the current administrative assistants in Central Administration. He felt additional office space would be needed on 3rd floor for the Director.

Mr. Sethi stated that an executive search firm would likely charge \$14,000-\$16,000 to fill the position. He suggested instead that advertising in local and regional newspapers (North Dakota, South Dakota, Minneapolis/St. Paul) be conducted.

Commissioner Campbell felt an independent contractor would provide the best service for the dollars invested.

Commissioner Brunsvold felt there are strong candidates for the position from our area. He felt at least three years needs to be committed to the project, and that it should be clear that the person is responsible to Clay County.

Commissioner Waller commented that he could see there would be benefits from either

hiring a contractor or hiring a person as a County employee. He requested a legal opinion as to whether or not the County could hire an employee for a specific period of time (for example, 3 years) and if at that time the results have not been achieved, can the County release the person without fear of legal issues.

Mr. Jim Soncrant, a member of the original Countywide Economic Development Exploratory Committee, a potential applicant for the position, an Economic Development service provider, and Moorhead resident/taxpayer, expressed his opinion that if the County hires a person for the position, they would be setting up a bureaucracy, which may or may not produce results but will cost money. He stated that with the limited resources available, he is strongly in favor of an independent contractor position to market Clay County and facilitate the process to bring about economic development, whether it be commercial, industrial or residential.

Commissioner Campbell commented that the smaller cities in the County are hiring independent contractors (Glyndon, Hawley, Dilworth).

Commissioner Waller questioned the focus of an independent contractor if they could take on other entities to work with as well.

Commissioner Brunsvold agreed, in that the economic development director needs to be devoted to Clay County, and that is their only focus. He felt there will be a significant dollar commitment to get a significant result.

Commissioner Waller inquired if there would be an independent contractor who would deal with Clay County's issues only. Mr. Soncrant commented that if hired he would deal with Clay County issues only for economic development purposes.

Mr. Sethi commented that as the qualifications are written, the County is looking for someone who can work with a whole series of economic development issues. He believed that the staff should be based within the County to maintain continuity, and coordinate the overall process. He felt that an independent contractor would be limited in spending an adequate amount of expert time given the limited amount of funds available.

Commissioner McCarthy felt an independent contractor should be hired who has control over what they have to produce. Commissioner Campbell agreed and questioned what the best reporting method would be for the Board.

Commissioner Waller requested a legal opinion on hiring a County employee and their rights if we terminate after a pre-determined amount of time ("release without cause"). He questioned the likelihood of an independent contractor only working for Clay County and not serving other areas. Commissioner Waller questioned what additional funds would be needed for remodeling to house the position. Commissioner McCarthy requested an estimated total budget for a County position (salary, benefits, etc.).

INCOME MAINTENANCE CASE ACTIVITY REPORT, SECOND QUARTER 2003

Ms. Mary Luhman Olsen, Social Services, presented the 2nd Quarter 2003 Income Maintenance Unit Case Activity Report. The total case count average for the 2nd quarter was 4063, an increase of 2.6% over the total 2002 count by 103 cases.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF INCREASED LICENSED CAPACITY FOR HEARTLAND

INDUSTRIES

Barb and Mike Hillenbrand, Heartland Industries II, requested the Board's approval of an increase in licensed capacity to 30 consumers. The consumers are disabled individuals placed in vocational settings in the community. The consumers have existing waiver funding in place or temporarily receive funding from the Department of Rehabilitative Services. A recent needs assessment indicates the need for a higher licensed capacity for the long term needs of the program.

On motion by Campbell, seconded by Waller, and unanimously carried, the Board approved an increase in licensed capacity to 30 consumers for Heartland Industries II.

MR. HOWARD PERSON - EXTENSION AG POSITION

The Board visited with Mr. Howard Person, County Extension Director/Agriculture and Environmental Issues, serving Red Lake, Pennington and Pope counties. Mr. Person's position was reduced to .5 FTE with the recent statewide changes made by the University of Minnesota. Mr. Person expressed his interest in serving Clay County in the future in some capacity.

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILLS AND VOUCHERS

On motion by McCarthy, seconded by Waller, and unanimously carried, the monthly bills and vouchers were approved for payment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Healthy Community Initiative - Commissioner McCarthy reported that Healthy Community Initiative has lost funding and is struggling. One position is vacant and will not be filled.

Clay Wilkin Opportunity Council - Commissioner Evert reported that the new name for Clay Wilkin is "Lakes and Prairies Community Action Partnership". They are now working with 24 counties in two states and the new name is more appropriate.

Governor's Council on GIS - Mark Sloan, Clay County GIS Coordinator, has been appointed to the Governor's Council on GIS, which will work with GIS and computer mapping.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vijay K. Sethi
County Administrator

Jon D. Evert, Chair
Clay County Board of Commissioners